Human Rights From Manitoba

THE MANITOBA HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

LA COMMISSION DES DROITS DE LA PERSONNE DU MANITOBA

The anti-racism sticker below was developed by **The Citizenship Council of Manitoba** to honour **The International Day For the Elimination of Racism** (March 21). The International Day was originally created to commemorate individuals slain during the Sharpesville Massacre in South Africa. The prime responsibility of the **CCM** is ***The International Centre***, one of the largest refugee settlement organizations in Canada.

Recently we spoke with Tom Denton, the Executive Director of the **CCM**, about how the stickers came about. "In 1990, the Canadian government was bringing to everyone's attention that the United Nations had proclaimed March 21 as the International Day for the Elimination of Racism. The question was, what would we do at the International Centre? So I came up with this idea for the stickers.

"We had two objectives. One was to recognize the day, March 21, and the problem of racism. We wanted to bring both to people's attention. The flip side was to give people the opportunity to make a public personal statement. By wearing the sticker they would show they are opposed to racism.

"A lot of people have worked on this project, but I should single out Cheryl Mott, who does all the work of sending out the invitations and filling the orders."

"In the first year, we distributed 79,000 stickers. In 1997, we distributed 186,000. Heritage Canada did it last year, now we're doing it again." Funding for the project comes from Heritage Canada. Support has also been received from businesses such as Saan Stores.

March 21 Events

As this publication went to press, events were still in the planning stages, so this list is not complete: Myths of Multiculturalism Mall Display*, Portage Place, March 20. *Unity Day*, Maples Collegiate, March 10. *Racial Harmony Day*, Andrew Mynarski School, March 10. *Seeing the world through different eyes: International Film Festival*, Towne Cinema 8, March 16-21. *Contact the Coalition for Human Equality for more information, at 947-0213.

This is not the first page. It is a pre-page.

2008-036597

Ida Erickson, Pat Daniels

Rural Rattlings!

By Ida Erickson

Our Brandon Office is located on the 3rd floor of the Provincial Building (340 9th Street). Our area covers west to the Manitoba-Saskatchewan boarder, north to Swan River, south to the American Boarder, and east to Portage la Prairie. Some of the **highlights** of our 1998 year in terms of complaints were:

- √ ***Three sexual harassment complaints*** closed by early resolutions. In two of the cases the Complainant's received monetary damages amounting to $300 and $400 for humiliation and embarrassment. The other Complainant agreed to the Respondent receiving sexual harassment education;
- √ ***Two other Complainants***, both with visual disabilities, agreed to an early resolution of their complaints filed against their employers. One party received a monetary award of $2,000 and an offer of a job after a medical evaluation had confirmed he was physically able to do the job. The other complainant was offered a vacant position.
- √ ***As a result of a pre-complaint***, a respondent changed a policy regarding rental units. This policy would have resulted in discrimination based on source of income.
- √ ***A Human Rights Day ceremony*** held in the Provincial Building on December 10. Deputy Mayor Jessiman officiated at the candle lighting ceremony. We felt that our open house was a success. About 55 people attended.
- √ ***Participation in education and outreach*** activities within Brandon as well as the surrounding area. These provide both the Intake Officer, Pat Daniels, and the Human Rights Officer, Ida Erickson, with an excellent opportunity to become "more visible" in many communities. It is also important in making communities more aware of the role of the Commission. In the future, perhaps the Spring, we are looking forward to hosting an **Employers Seminar**. These seminars have met with great success in Winnipeg.
- √ ***Ida Erickson and Rich Ludwick*** (Human Rights Officer from Winnipeg), facilitated two Human Rights Advocacy Courses.
- √ ***Last, but certainly not least,*** we have switched over to the "new" computer system. We officially became "transitioned" in October and we are at last starting to feel comfortable with the change!

If you have any concerns/questions please feel free to drop in or to give us a call. Our number is (204) 726-6261or toll free 1-800-201-2551.

Human Rights for Employers

New Seminars on: *May 6, Sept. 29, Nov. 18,*
Winnipeg, Norwood Hotel, 8:30 am - 4 pm

A full day, business-oriented seminar specifically for employers, to answer questions on topics including employers' rights, pregnancy, dress codes, sexual harassment, and accommodating religions and disabilities.

Get your questions answered by the staff who resolve complaints!

Cost: $25 per person (includes lunch, coffee/tea breaks and print materials). Please call 945-3012 to register or get more information.

This is not the first page, either.

Human Rights From Manitoba

A Newsletter Of Human Rights Developments in Manitoba

THE MANITOBA HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

LA COMMISSION DES DROITS DE LA PERSONNE DU MANITOBA

Volume 1, Number 6. Spring, 1999

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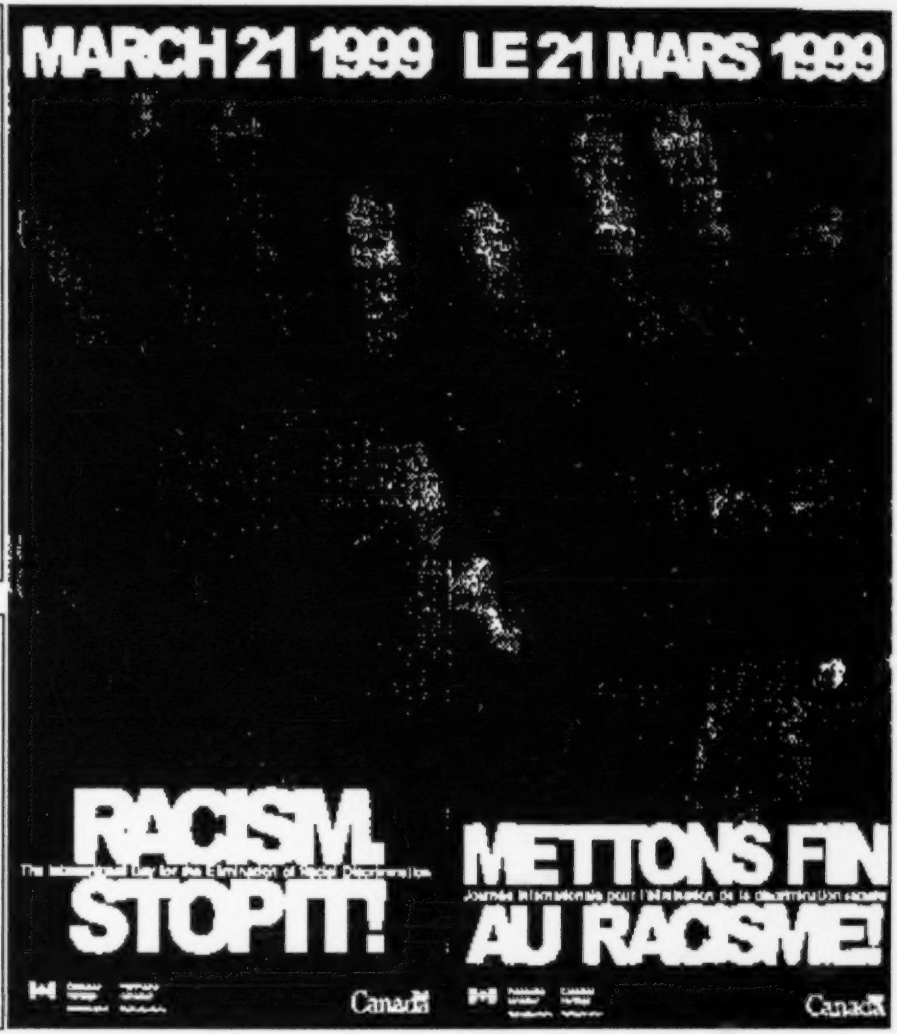
Write us at : 7th Floor-175 Hargrave Street, Wpg MB R3C 3R8.



You guessed it.

The 1998 Human Rights Journalism Awards

The Commission, The Winnipeg Press Club and The Community Legal Education Association are pleased to announce the recipients of the Twelfth Annual Human Rights Journalism Awards.

The Print (Small Circulation) Award went to The Brandon Sun and Peter Dalla-Vicenza, Scott Gibbons, Diane Nelson and Adrienne Spring for articles about a suicide epidemic in a First Nation community. The Print (Large Circulation) Award was given to Riva Harrison of The Winnipeg Free Press for her articles about prostitution. Honourable Mention went to Mike Maunder and Virginia Maracle, of The Winnipeg Free Press, for their stories about Aboriginal peoples. The Jury's Honourable Mention Award went to Moving On, a CBC TV show about disability issues.

Dalla-Vicenza, Nelson, Gibbons, Spring

About the Award won by Mike Maunder and Virginia Maracle, Free Press Features Editor Buzz Currie writes:

Mike and Virginia have been writing "Inner City Voices" for the Free Press for two years. The aim is twofold: to open a window for the rest of Winnipeg and Manitoba on the inner city, and to provide a voice for the people who live in the inner city. It doesn't look at the area through rose-coloured glasses by any means, but the series aims at being prescriptive —we want to know what works as well as what the problems are. We at the Free Press are proud to see Mike and Virginia's work acknowledged.

The Brandon Sun On Its Award

First, Peter Dalla-Vicenza gave credit where it was due: to someone else. He modestly said he only wrote a few editorials, and that it was Adrienne Spring and Scott Gibbons who wrote the bulk of the award-winning stories, with a significant contribution by Diane Nelson. The stories were about a suicide epidemic on the Birdtail Sioux First Nation.

It was the fourth consecutive year *The Brandon Sun* has won a Manitoba Human Rights Journalism Award. "It feels great to win. I think it validates," Dalla-Vicenza said, "that you're doing the kind of work that's important to people. Newspapers are supposed to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable. A story like this opens our eyes to what's going on out there." He said a concern raised by the stories was that "resources which were available to the First Nation were not being adequately allocated. The reporters who did the stories had their eyes opened."

He said the *Sun* is planning on revisiting the stories soon, to see what has changed. "I don't think there have been the kinds of changes that could have happened. The reaction from the politicians who could help just has not been there." Why? "Self-government is a laudable goal. But does it mean that people on reserves should look after themselves without any outside intervention? In another community the problems would not be allowed. I am concerned about the possibility that self government is an excuse for the other levels of government abrogating their responsibilities. That's my gut feeling."

Riva Harrison: Journalism, Social Conscience and LifeOn The Streets

When I first won a MHRC award in 1992 — an Honourable Mention for day-to-day news coverage about human rights issues — I was a rookie reporter committed to writing about social conditions. Such stories were my passion, and I had convinced my editors at the ***Winnipeg Sun*** to make social affairs a full-time "beat." They agreed, and even after I became the Sun's Legislative reporter, social issues remained an important and substantial part of my daily work.

As the millennium approaches, however, I am a different journalist than the young woman who was convinced she would end child poverty, solvent abuse, homelessness and hunger by writing about it. Change, I have since discovered, often occurs in a one-step-forward, two-steps-backward fashion, with politics as its clumsy dance partner. It can be a painful process, and I applaud those who remain on the frontlines working for meaningful social change. My career has taken a different path in recent years, however, veering into arts and entertainment. But what I first viewed as "fluff," I now see as a powerful — perhaps the most powerful — vehicle for influencing public opinion. Which brings me back to the 1998 MHRC awards and the play, ***Hectic***.

I had written countless, possibly hundreds, of news articles about prostitution when I learned about ***Hectic***. A production by the now-defunct Popular Theatre Alliance of Manitoba, ***Hectic*** was different than other theatrical endeavours in that it employed a dozen or so people who are or had been prostitutes. The process involved months of workshops, which included the storytelling sessions that would eventually become the play. As a participant in these gatherings, I became a member of a "family." While the ***Sun*** — to its credit — encouraged me to immerse myself in the project, I also spent huge blocks of my own time just hanging out. More often than not, I left my notebook behind.

What I discovered covering this story was that in seeing a group of prostitutes in the context of theatre — or, in other words, outside of their stereotypical context — I was able to view them as complex individuals with wide-ranging ideas and interests (something that's rarely obvious in daily news coverage). I got to know about their kids, partners and families, even their favourite colours and TV shows. Somewhere in the process, they became people — friends — for whom being a prostitute was only part of the package. Never again will I be able to read about the plight of a Winnipeg hooker without wondering if he/she is someone I know. I believe the same could be said for the theatre-goers who saw ***Hectic***, and perhaps this understanding is one of the true precursors of change.

Whatever hope I may feel, however, the reality cannot be ignored — and it is for the following reasons that winning the award also produced feelings of deep sadness. PTAM, a gritty little company that challenged the status quo, is gone, a victim of funding cuts. Many of the cast members are back on the streets, their phones disconnected, their lives in disarray. While ***Hectic*** never attempted to get them off the streets, many of the participants simply stopped hooking while on the project, a testimony to the value of meaningful work (they were paid for their time). The week after ***Hectic*** closed, I received several panicky calls from women desperate to stay off the streets. It was a cold dose for those who believed the production was only the start of something better.

It's with these mixed thoughts and emotions that I accepted the 1998 MHRC award. For me, the project — and, by extension, my stories — raised more questions than answers. Still, I'm grateful I had an opportunity to explore them — and, in an ironic twist, it was my first MHRC award that convinced the ***Hectic*** group I was qualified for the job. Indeed, MHRC awards are valuable tools in the ongoing struggle to tell the stories of the silent voices playwright Margaret Sweatman wrote about in ***Hectic***. Human rights awards also help validate this brand of journalism, often the first casualty in reactionary times.

Being recognised for outstanding work is always gratifying, but the nature of the MHRC awards makes it critical we don't forget about our subject matter. Even in arts and entertainment reporting, happily-ever-after doesn't always apply.

Two Adjudications

By Dianna Scarth
Executive Director

Human rights adjudicators in two recent decisions have found in favor of The Commission and two Complainants who filed sexual harassment complaints against their employers. The complaints were somewhat unusual in that the conduct which formed the basis of both complaints occurred outside the formal workplace--one during a pre-employment interview and the second during a "meeting" after business hours. Both Adjudicators granted the Manitoba Human Rights Commission ***monitoring orders*** in addition to awarding financial compensation to the two individual complainants. Monitoring orders are very rare, but the particular circumstances in both cases made them necessary.

"Meeting" in a hotel room

Adjudicator Colleen Suche, Q.C., ruled that Winnipeg businessman Keith Reyes had sexually harassed a former employee. The Complainant was twenty years old at the time. She had been employed by Mr. Reyes' company, Small Business Services Inc., as an account manager for three weeks in May 1996. Mr. Reyes requested that she meet him one evening to discuss business. Although she initially refused and suggested another time would be better, evidence indicated that Mr. Reyes persisted. The Complainant agreed to meet at a restaurant, but when she met him, Mr. Reyes insisted their meeting take place in a motel room. During the "meeting" he made physical and verbal sexual advances. The Complainant became upset, rejected the advances, left the motel in tears and reported the incident to the police and later to the Commission.

Although Mr. Reyes denied the allegations, he refused to testify at the hearing. Adjudicator Suche found that the Complainant had been consistent and believable in her recounting of the incident, and concluded this "was a deliberate and planned abuse of one's position and authority." She noted that "an invitation to a meeting is not an invitation to sex". The Adjudicator ordered that the Complainant receive lost wages covering the period from the date of the incident until she obtained new employment, general damages of $2,000 to compensate her for her loss of dignity and self respect, and exemplary damages of $1,000. She said that, although it was a one-time incident, it was a very clear breach of the law.

Monitoring order for two years

The Adjudicator also directed that the Commission monitor the employment practices of Mr. Reyes and his two companies, *Small Business Services Inc.* and *Tropical Cuisine Consultants Inc.*, or any other company that he should manage or control, for two years. Suche noted that although the imposition of such an order is invasive, it is justified if there is reason to believe a Respondent may not comply with The Code in future.

Solicited during interview

In a different complaint, Adjudicator Tom Goodman, Q.C., found that Alain Caron had sexually harassed a woman who had applied for a job at Phil-Can Services Limited. Adjudicator Goodman accepted the Complainant's evidence that Mr. Caron advised her before making a decision he wished to meet her at a restaurant. When she attended he showed her a "preliminary employment contract" which described the job duties. The document was signed by both parties. The Complainant's evidence was that she was then subjected to a sexual solicitation. She turned it down and no further formal job offer was forthcoming.

Similar fact evidence was provided directly by another job applicant, through an affidavit, outlining a similar approaching to hiring, complete with numerous meetings at restaurants, and sexual references consistent with that attested to by the Complainant. A Commission investigator also described similar complaints made by two other applicants. An employee from Human Resources Development Canada (*HRDC*) testified he had received complaints about Mr. Caron's recruitment methods, and as a result stopped his use of *HRDC* facilities for recruitment purposes.

Avoiding harassment is simply good business. Smart employers avoid protracted and expensive

Lead To Monitoring Orders

Although Mr. Caron did not testify at the hearing and therefore could not be subjected to cross examination, the Adjudicator found that the evidence corroborating the Complainant's position was reliable and consistent.

Abuse of power

Adjudicator Goodman noted that "the essence of sexual harassment is abuse of power." Courts have previously accepted that sexual harassment law extends to the hiring process. Goodman concluded that the Complainant had been subjected to a sexual solicitation as a prerequisite to a job offer.

In awarding damages, he noted the impact of the contravention on the Complainant, including living in fear of what might happen after the complaint was filed and becoming less trusting of people. She was awarded $1,000 to compensate her for injury to her dignity, feeling and self respect, in addition to a further $1,000 in exemplary damages. Although the complaint related to one incident only and did not involve physical contact, he found that the Respondent had acted "with malice" and considered this amount to be appropriate in the circumstances. The Adjudicator described the conduct of the Respondent as "disgraceful" for using "the hiring process to secure the company of women and ultimately trying to coerce (the Complainant) to have sexual relations with him."

Rationale for monitoring order

In addition, the Adjudicator ordered that for a period of five years any business or corporation of which Mr. Caron is an Officer or Director be compelled to notify the Commission of any hiring activity, including names, addresses and phone numbers of all persons interviewed for positions, identities of successful applicants, and the date of departure and reason for departure of any employees. The Commission is also entitled to audit the books of any of Mr. Caron's companies with respect to hiring practices.

In both of the adjudications described above, the Commission sought monitoring orders because of concerns about the financial circumstances of both Respondents. Made it unlikely that any pecuniary award might actually be recovered.

Part of a Bigger Pattern

In any given year, sexual harassment complaints account for approximately one-quarter of *all* complaints received by the Commission, despite the fact this is a high profile problem, and subject to significant media exposure.

Both the case law and human rights legislation impose a heavy onus on employers to protect their employees from such conduct. Even when the employer is not the direct harasser, the employer may be liable if it knew or ought to have known of improper conduct in the workplace, or if it fails to take appropriate action once such conduct is brought to its attention. Having harassment policies in place is an important step in protecting an employer, but it is only a beginning. The policies must be effective, ensuring that employees are aware that harassment will not be tolerated, and will be investigated quickly and thoroughly, with appropriate action being taken where incidents of harassment have been substantiated.

The Commission, in addition to providing very practical advice on how to prevent and/or respond to harassment allegations, or on how to implement the sexual harassment policies, has initiated new programmes over the last two years to assist employers who are genuinely interested in meeting their obligations under The Code. A series of seminars for employers (see inside front cover) offers information regarding appropriate ways to deal with harassment.

More information can be found on our web site: www.gov.mb.ca/hrc

investigations and hearings by taking proactive steps to ensure that their workplace is harassment free.

The *Wrong* Orientation?

"The Universal Declaration of Human Rights calls for all people to be entitled to feel safe and secure," says Derek. "But how can you feel safe when you're closeted, in a classroom, and your classmates keep saying "that's so faggy" or "that's so gay" when they want to say something bad about someone or something? Most times the teachers do nothing, and you're left on your own."
Derek is a volunteer with the **Winnipeg Gay/Lesbian Bisexual Youth Group**. Recently we met with him, Cindy (the co-ordinator of The Transgender Support Group), and Donna Huen, a staff person with the Winnipeg Gay/Lesbian Resource Centre about today's issues around gender identity and sexual orientation. Unfortunately, today's issues turn out to be yesterday's issues, last year's issues, last decade's issues.

High School—It's Not Easy

Derek said that "teachers are extremely complacent with students acting out in classes. How can you feel safe and secure when closeted, when in your classroom there are certain people coming down on gays and lesbians. The teachers do nothing."
He mentioned a project to address homophobia in high schools. The project involved talking to people about sexual orientation issues and discrimination. A school official said the project was simply "too much" and stopped it. The project was never resumed. When students attempted to write about the incident in the school newsletter, they were told by a Division official that if the paper printed the story, it would be shut down. Derek says nothing has happened since.

What Should Change?

"I'd like to see an acceptance of the gay and lesbian population in schools who are out. They should not have to live in an environment where all the students say 'That's so gay' or 'What are you doing, you big faggot?' In lifestyles or health class I'd like to see a unit addressing the issues with respect to gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered students. It should be part of the health unit."
Derek said the lack of sensitivity of teaching staff contributes to the problem. "The Multi-School Diversity Action Group is combating homophobia in high schools, students who are addressing the issues in their own high schools. In one of the high schools they put over the p.a. that the Multidiversity Action Group is meeting,. One of the youth group members heard about this, and wanted to attend to get those facts. The teacher should have addressed the issue of homophobia but was not supportive. So the student felt loss of security in classroom. He felt threatened, it was an unsafe atmosphere to be a homosexual. I wonder how many classrooms in this school this happened in."
"If you address racism or sexism in the classroom you won't have people rising up against it to subvert it. It's the invisibility of gay people. They don't see who we are."
He added that "while the schools have pamphlets up for different groups, they have pamphlets addressing racism and sexism, they should also have pamphlets about sexuality—there are good pamphlets out there for this."

Transgender Issues No Longer Invisible

Addressing transgendered issues, Cindy spoke of the challenges of belonging to a minority group which has been relatively invisible until recently . "The public has many misconceptions about transgendered people, especially because of sometimes sensational press and TV coverage. A transgendered person is someone whose core gender identity is at odds with their birth gender. Such individuals often go through a lengthy process of 'transitioning' to their real gender.
"In a sense," Cindy said, "we're fifty years behind the gay lesbian movement in terms of having society see us as a group with specific needs and concerns that are relevant to the Human Rights. There are many fronts that we are fighting on."
"One of our objectives in establishing our support group was to lend peer support to individuals who are transgendered in Manitoba. Even more importantly, we wanted to establish a profile so that we could both articulate and pursue issues relevant to transitioning from one

Staff At The Winnipeg Gay/Lesbian Resource Centre Say Some Government Services Have It Wrong

gender to another. Gender transitioning is a complex process that takes years, and depends heavily upon psychological and medical supports. Those supports are not always in place. There are many people in the support group who are having very difficult time with the system."

Her specific issues, raised during the conversation? "In Manitoba, it is still the case that your gender designation on official documentation is not changed until after you have had gender reassignment surgery and have an affidavit from a doctor attesting to this fact. That means that your legal gender status depends exclusively on your genitals. Generally on a driver's licence, health card or passport we face the embarrassment of having inappropriate documents which state we are male, after our bodies have changed and we are living full time as women."

Other places do not have the same requirements. She pointed out that "especially in the US, for example in California and Minnesota, all you need is documentation from your treating physician for them to give you the appropriate gender designation on a driver's license and other records. As long as the surgery is scheduled, the American authorities will issue a passport in the new gender. In Canada, we do not get that. A driver's licence lists gender as "M," but the photograph and name on the licence is that of a woman. "

Cindy said that medical support is not what it should be. "There used to be a team at the HSC that provided care, from diagnosis to surgery. People now often have to go elsewhere, as far as Minneapolis and Toronto. We're in a Catch-22 situation of being referred to people here with no expertise in the area and who don't want to move into it."

"Transsexualism is a bonafide medical diagnosis (gender dysphoria). Patients are entitled as citizens of Manitoba to the treatment our condition requires. All too frequently, we must resort to other means because the system fails us."

She said transgendered people are now sent for surgery by Manitoba Health to a doctor in New Brunswick who has limited experience. "In Canada we have one of the most experienced gender reassignment surgeons in North America practicing in Montreal. Alberta sends its transgendered people there. The Transsexual Support Group would like to know why Manitoba does not send us to a surgeon with experience."

Derek said listening to Cindy was an eye opener for him. "We are all challenging gender stereotypes by just being who we are. What right do heterosexual people have to arrogate normalcy to themselves, and leave us nibbling at the crumbs?"

Donna Huen added, "We want the right to be ourselves, the right to be who we are without harassment, to live our lives without fear, the way we want to live."

The Winnipeg Gay/Lesbian Resource Centre has just secured funding for a ***Gay Lesbian Bisexual Transgender Youth Project***. The new project involves meeting with school officials, Division officials, Boards and Executive Directors of youth serving agencies. The purpose is to help them to address policies that impact on the safety and security of gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgendered people. The project will likely have begun by the time this newsletter comes out.

Please contact The Winnipeg Gay/Lesbian Resource Centre if you wish more information, at 1-222 Osborne Street South, in Winnipeg. Phone 284-5208 for information, or 474-0212 to leave a message. Outside Winnipeg, call toll free at 1-888-399-0005 [you will get a recording with information].

Note: thank you to* Average Good Looks *for the two photos for this article!

International Women's Day and Me

By Janice Johnson-Grisdale

(Ms. Johnson-Grisdale is a trainee in a special program involving the Commission)

I know myself as a mother, wife, grandmother, daughter, sister, auntie, co-worker, friend. At the Aboriginal Community Rights Training Program (*A.C.R.A.*) I am known as an intern. During my training I have been provided many opportunities of participation and observation in the area of human rights. One of the events I have thought of a great deal is a day specially designated as a day to appreciate the works and gifts of women: **International Women's Day**, March 10.

Expectations of the A.C.R.A. training program are challenging. I think of how I fit in. I take care of me because I am important. Taking care of my family comes more easily when I remember that. Treating others with dignity and respect is recognising we are all created equal. My ongoing learning place of life to raise levels of inspiration in everybody who shares my world with me continues to grow. Self encouragement creates readiness to learn.

The tremendous support I feel from everyone involved in this training program I have found unique. The four partnering agencies are: The Canadian Human Rights Commission, The Manitoba Association for Rights & Liberties, The Manitoba Human Rights Commission and Aboriginal Ganootamaage Justice Services of Winnipeg. It is at these organisations here I gain understanding of rights and responsibilities we share and how we are protected by human rights laws.

On-the-job training rotation occurs every fourth month to another partnering agency. The orientation to new surroundings and people and duties strengthens relationship building. It is a comfortable feeling and one that I associate to feeling safe at home. Familiarity provides me with motivation to be ready to meet another new work day. Feeling safe and secure is a way of life I work hard for on a daily basis.

Taking and sharing thoughts with my brothers and sisters brings us genuinely close. The more we get together the more we come to understand how our parents did the very best they could at the time. With a genuine interest in helping our children, we too, strive for the best.

It is from teachings of our children I know to be a respectful parent. Sharing of a compassionate heart and growing to meet their needs. Sons Jody, Virgil, Elliot, Joshua, latest additions Charlene, Jamie and Caroline, and grandchildren Shawn, Samantha, Jessie, Wyonnia, Chad, Dakota, Sheena, Dustin and Loren are my most immediate children and grandchildren. Smile. My most cherished role is as a mother and grandmother, it is an honour.

Later in the evenings I share with my husband how I've recognised my efforts to expand my learning style into areas of watching and listening, thinking and doing, relating everything I learn to my daily life to help me to continue to grow as a person. Together we share how we influence each other.

I received a phone call late in the night. It was time to go into action as a birth coach. I focussed on my purpose of being, participating as new life made way into this world. With blue thumbs I returned home to prepare my family for their morning. Objective of the day being to raise our understanding of the issues we face and how they impact our lives, I have to do the _____ or I want to do the _____. Fill in the blank: laundry, dishes, sweeping, etc. Daily routines of pitching in around our home is very accurate to a sign I once read, This is an equal opportunity kitchen.

As a woman I am thankful for continuing to enrich my role as a peacemaker and base my actions toward fairness and justice in our loving and compassionate world. For all this I feel blessed by my Creator, Kiji Manitou, for feeling alive. As I reflect on International Women's Day, I hope you are too.

Questions about human rights? In Winnipeg, phone 945-3007. In Northern Manitoba, phone 627-8270 (The Pas). In Western Manitoba, phone 726-6261 (Brandon). Western toll free: 1-800-282-8069. Northern toll free: 1-800-676-7084. Our bilingual website address is: www.gov.mb.ca/hrc